

Washington, DC – Today Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA) continued to fight to help working families, the environment and to put our nation on the path to energy independence when he voted for the Farm Extension Act of 2007. — “This legislation goes beyond helping our nation’s farmers, it provides funding for nutrition programs, the environment and research into renewable energy sources,” said the Congressman, “Two-thirds of the funding in this bill goes to nutrition programs for low-income families who depend on this to feed their children.”

This legislation does a lot to help families in need. It reauthorizes the nutrition programs, to help low income families, including the food stamp program that keeps many Americans from going hungry. The bill increases the minimum benefit under the Food Stamp program for the first time in 30 years, and indexes it to inflation. It eliminates the current cap on childcare costs to help the working poor meet rising costs. In addition, it nearly doubles the funding for the Emergency Food Assistant Program and expands the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program to all 50 states.

“It is unconscionable that in the richest nation on earth, children go to bed hungry,” commented the Congressman, “We must do all we can to see that the poorest Americans are cared for and this bill helps do that.”

The 2007 Farm Bill also boosts funding for renewable energy programs by 600 percent. It encourages the production of renewable energy, including biofuels and biobased products that protects our environment and encourages energy independence. It provides loan guarantees for the development of biorefineries that process biofuels from dedicated energy crops and agriculture and forestry waste materials, a key step toward bringing more renewable fuels to market in America.

Since taking office, Congressman Sestak has consistently fought for the environment. He has worked on legislation to address global warming, including cosponsoring and passing the CLEAN Energy Act, which repealed \$14 billion in subsidies given to Big Oil companies and shifts those resources to investments in clean, alternative energy and energy efficiency. In addition, Congressman Sestak supported the Democratic Budget, which placed a high priority on tackling global warming and making America more energy independent. He has also pushed through bills to refocus our efforts on alternative energies, including co-sponsoring the Securing America’s Energy Independence Act, which extends the energy tax credit for solar energy property and qualified fuel cell property and the tax credit for residential energy efficient property expenditures. And he is a cosponsor of the Fuel Economy Reform Act, which seeks to improve

the fuel efficiency of our cars by raising the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards.

“For our economic, environmental, and security well-being, we must reduce our national dependency on petroleum products,” said Congressman Sestak. “Global warming and our addiction to oil are some of the greatest challenges of our time. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to act now.”

The bill also focuses on conservation of open spaces and makes it a cornerstone of agriculture for all producers in all regions of the country. The bill increases funding and access to conservation programs to preserve farm and ranchland, improve water quality and quantity, and enhance soil conservation, air quality, and wildlife habitat on working lands.

One of the biggest threats facing our watersheds comes from the indirect runoff of pollutants from our everyday lives, such as oil from our streets and parking lots and excess fertilizer and herbicides that runoff from our lawns. During a heavy storm the pollution being dumped into our waterways increases exponentially. That is why since he has been in Congress; Congressman Sestak has been addressing the issue of proper watershed management. One of the first things he did was tour our municipalities to see the impacts of the 2004 floods in our region, including what culverts needed repair and what streams and river banks needed restoration, to discern how best to address the problem. Because of these concerns, since the recent election Joe has met with interested parties from conservation groups and Jamie Anderson, watershed specialist for Delaware County Conservation District, to the Army Corps of Engineers to develop a comprehensive watershed review that takes advantage of existing plans to best define the problems we are facing and serve as a comprehensive action for all involved to help implement

“What we do today will have a significant impact on our watersheds tomorrow,” added the Congressman. “If we are going to leave our water purer for our children with environmental restoration of our creeks, we must redouble our efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive plan in which all interested parties and municipalities can participate.”

Proper watershed management and conservation is particularly important for our region since it has experienced sever flooding, including the 2004 flood. That is why Congressman Sestak toured our municipalities to see the impacts of the 2004 floods in our region and to discern how best to address the problem. In particular, he met with Jeff Featherstone, an expert in flood plain mapping from Temple University, about our outdated mapping. We are currently using maps from the 1970s that have different standards and are out of date. Consequently, local ordinances and developers state that certain people are living in flood plains when in fact they

are not, and vice versa. This has significant impact not just on insurance rates, but it also means that we are developing and doing water management on bad data, which in some cases could be compounding the problem as developers try to follow ordinances that are based on bad data; or we are ignoring issues that need to be addressed; or we are not fixing items that need to be fixed. This funding will help up address this critical problem. In addition, the Congressman is seeking funding through the Army Corps of Engineers for a Reconnaissance Study, which would cost about \$250,000 to identify the problems, needs and opportunities regarding water resources and water management in the 7th District.

“As someone who grew up in the Darby Creek watershed in Springfield, I know the value and importance watersheds have on our community,” noted the Congressman. “That is why I will continue to work with all interested parties to develop a comprehensive watershed review that takes advantage of existing plans to best define the problems we are facing and serve as a comprehensive action for all involved to help implement.”

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.